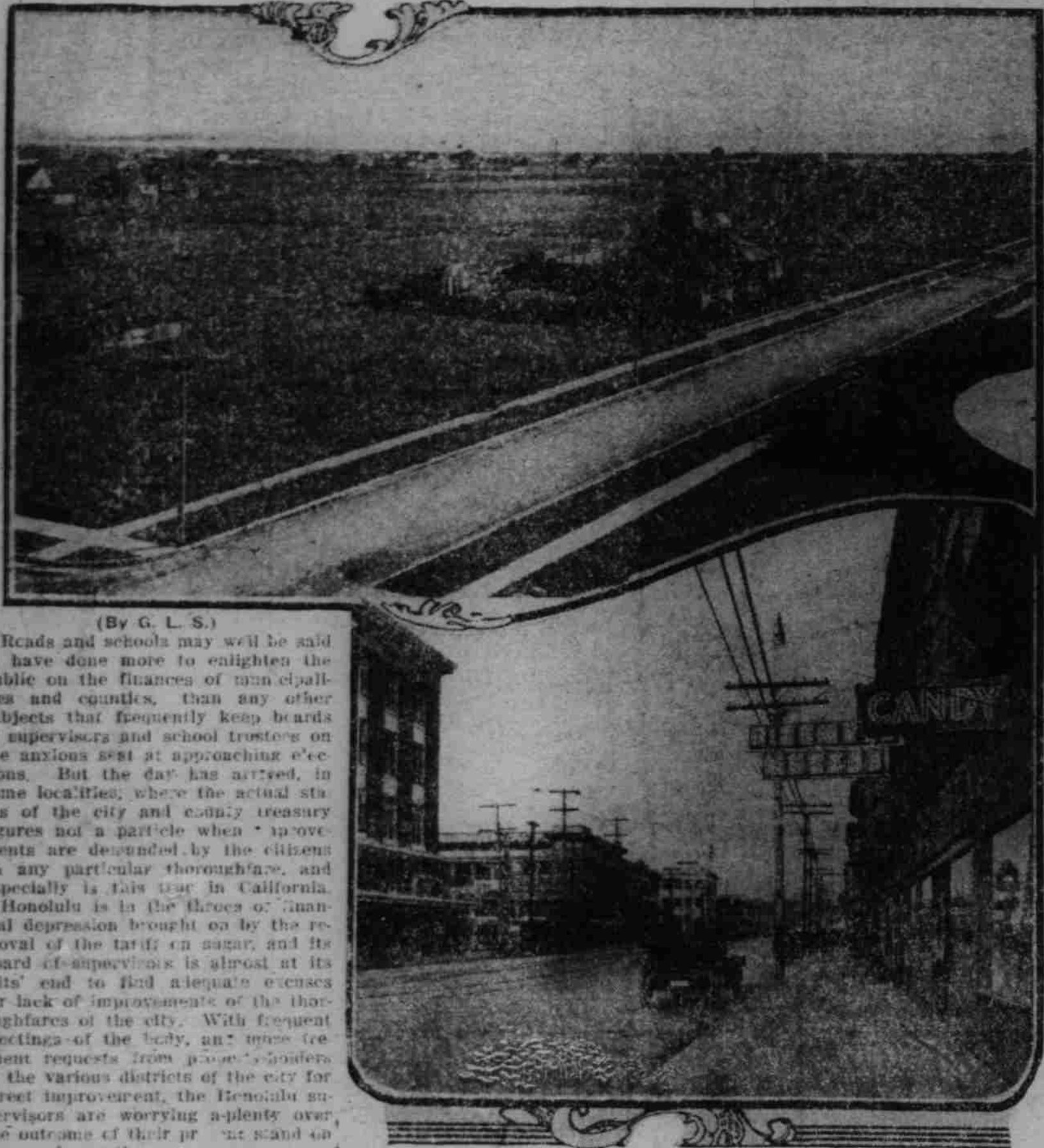


THE PUBLIC SERVICE PAGE

DEVOTED TO TOPICS DEALING WITH HAWAII'S WELFARE ALONG MANY LINES

Frontage Tax System Proves Big Success in City of Richmond, Cal.



(By G. L. S.)

Roads and schools may well be said to have done more to enlighten the public on the finances of municipalities and counties, than any other subjects that frequently keep boards of supervisors and school trustees on the anxious seat at approaching elections. But the day has arrived, in some localities, where the actual status of the city and county treasury figures are not a particle when improvements are demanded by the citizens on any particular thoroughfare, and especially in this case in California.

Honolulu is in the throes of financial depression brought on by the removal of the tariff on sugar, and its board of supervisors is almost at its wits' end to find adequate means for lack of improvements of the thoroughfares of the city. With frequent meetings of the body, and more frequent requests from people's spokesmen of the various districts of the city for street improvement, the Honolulu supervisors are every day aware of the outcome of their present stand on the road question.

With little or no money in the treasury of the city and county to attempt work on street improvement, and with surely not nearly enough to do any extensive improvement, it is no wonder that the supervisors meet frequently, possibly to commiserate with themselves over the shortage, and cheer each other up in the hope that when the election is over and they have been returned to their seats they will have a better start than they had a little over a year ago when they were full of hope and promises for the future.

And in the meantime, the territorial legislature has met and passed a law which has as its object the relief of the county treasury from the burdens of road-improvement and the shifting of the same to the shoulders of the property-holders where they properly belong. This bill, more commonly called the "Frontage Tax Law," has as its object the improvement of streets by the direct taxation of property immediately facing on these streets. One or two petitions have been presented to the supervisors for action, but for some reason they fear to put the proposition to an actual test and the matter has been allowed to slide.

How Richmond Handles It.

Some time ago, when the roads discussion was at its height, the writer took occasion to write a communication to the Star-Bulletin on the subject of "Good Roads" and how the question was handled in Richmond, California, a city of less than one-third the size of Honolulu. I endeavored at that time to give an idea of the result of street improvements. I have at hand a copy of Motor Field for February, 1914, and from an article by J. B. Adair, I quote:

"The main street building movement in Richmond began six or seven years ago, when the council ordered that Macdonald avenue, then a muddy road, be paved with asphalt its full width of 80 feet and its entire length, at that time, a mile and a half. The cost was to be assessed to the frontages. Some property owners thought the street paving tax meant ruin. There were protests and rows, but the progressive spirit, beginning then to get a foothold, won. Macdonald avenue was paved, the result being a thoroughfare that set a new record for cities the age of Richmond."

"The beneficial effects on the avenue and on the city were so quickly apparent that the knockers became enthusiasts. The policy of good streets had won its place."

Adds Property Value.

"The property owners have learned that every dollar spent in paving a street adds several to the value of their frontage, the proportion being greater as the entire city becomes improved. The miles upon miles of finely improved streets in a city that may be said, as far as real development is concerned, to be only seven years old, is remarkable. It is not pride alone that causes Richmond to improve streets. The citizens have found that it pays—pays big."

"On the main streets of Richmond run swift electric cars. The transportation system here, founded by Col. W. S. Rheem, Standard Oil official, in 1904, beats anything else in this line."

Scenes in Richmond, Cal., where the frontage tax has been proved a success and has made a young city grow rapidly.

to be found in a city of this size anywhere. The system is double-tracked to Oakland. Extensions are to be made here and more double-tracking done next year.

"While on transportation, one must consider automobiles. They are thick in Richmond. It looks as if every fifth man and many of the women own their machines. Richmond claims to have more machines than any other place its size that is not a resort having a lot of transient machines at certain seasons. The good streets in Richmond are largely responsible, the efficiency of the automobile being considered first."

Straight from Headquarters.

From Paul Edwards of San Francisco, who has been identified with Richmond since the time it was nothing but a big grain field and cow pasture—and that was only a dozen years ago—I received an interesting letter on the results of road improvement in that city. He says:

"The wonderful new city of Richmond, in Contra Costa county eight miles across the bay from San Francisco, is teaching the whole state of California the great profits that lie in street improvement—actual financial profits and the gain and comfort and health that comes from improved and consequently clean and usable streets."

"Richmond, a factory seaport, terminal of the Santa Fe and the home of the Standard Oil refinery and numerous other enterprises, while it started in 1901, with the advent of the Santa Fe, is really only seven years old, for it has been incorporated only seven years and up to that time had less than 5000 population. Now it has, from estimates made on the basis of school attendance, 18,000 to 19,000. Much of that population is actually due to the enterprise of the people in making street improvements. This has become almost a mania with them, since the profits from building good streets have been demonstrated."

"The claim is made that Richmond, taking size into consideration, leads the country in street improvements. The spirit toward street building today is amusing when considered with the situation six years ago when the first really important street job in Richmond was carried out."

"This was the paving of Macdonald avenue, today the central artery of the city and that largely because it was paved. Six years ago this thoroughfare, now lined with substantial buildings, was a muddy road—so bad that in the winter time vehicles sank to the axles in it. In the summer it was a cloud of dust."

"Progressive persons who had seen other cities prosper because of street improvement, started an agitation for the paving of Macdonald avenue its full length—a mile and a half. Instantly the conservatives ruffled their mass plumage and began knocking. The opposition was strong, but progress carried the day. Macdonald avenue was paved a mile and a half with asphalt—something of an improvement for a town the size and age of Richmond at that time."

"Today the men that opposed this improvement are ashamed to have their attitude toward it at that time mentioned. The only thing they want to talk about now is paving other streets. The prosperity of Macdonald avenue following improvement was certainly wonderful. Buildings sprang up all along it. Property values jumped amazingly. Lots worth \$2000 in those days are held at \$25,000 now. There isn't a man that paid the assessment for paving that did not reap enormous profits from it."

"So, in proportion, has been the benefits in the residence sections and on the other business streets. The people of Richmond do not wait to have street work ordered. They petition the council to have it done, gladly paying the assessments. In some cases where oiled macadam has been ordered the owners of frontage have petitioned that the more expensive asphalt be used."

"All over California Richmond is famous for its street improvements. With all that has been done, thousands of dollars' worth are always under way. Streets are paved in many cases before they are lined with houses, owners of property knowing that good streets will bring the buildings. They have seen it tried and know. Subdivision men make first class improvements and they have added many thousands of dollars' worth of street work to that done under the frontage assessment plan."

System is Simple.

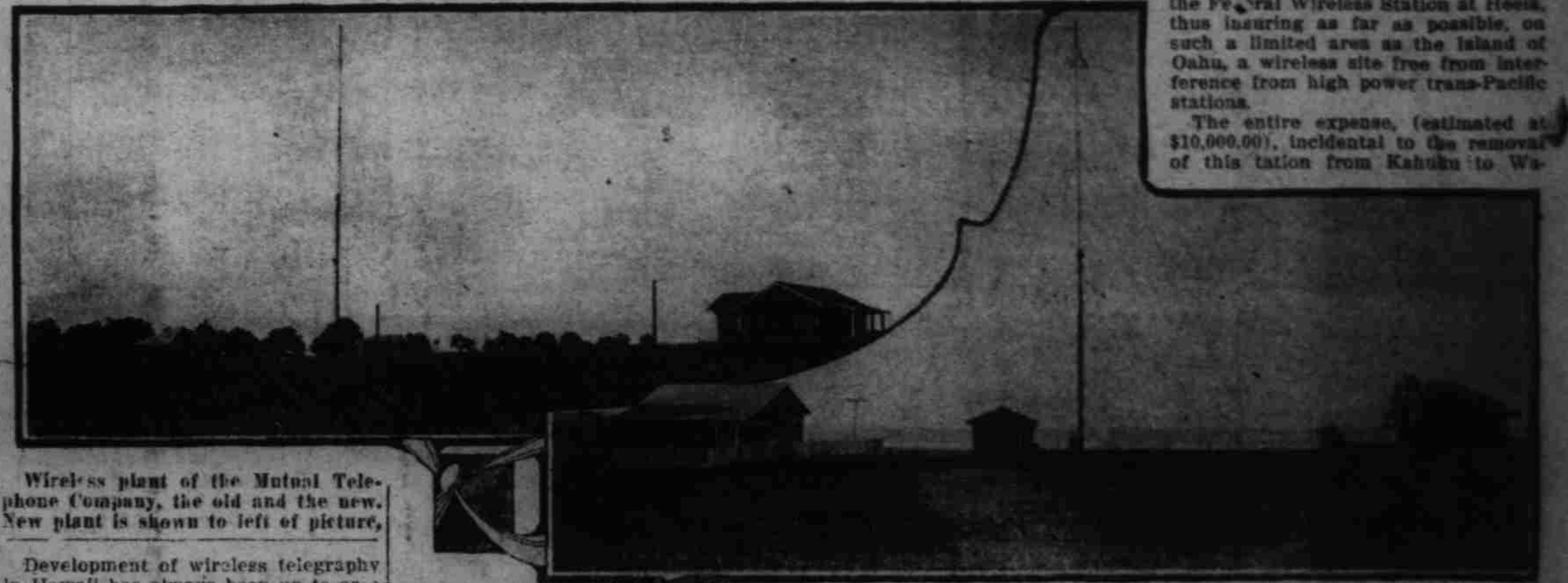
"The system is simple. The assessments are made under the Vrooman act as amended by the California legislature of 1911. Either a certain number of property owners petition to have a street improved or the council decides without petition that it should be done. The council orders the city engineer to prepare specifications and the work is ordered done. Protests can be made, and, of course, if sufficient reason can be shown, why the work should not be done the improvement is abandoned. Otherwise a contract is let and the property owners are assessed in pro rata according to the amount of frontage each owns. The intersection work is borne by the lot owners up to the middle of the blocks."

"The old time macadamized pavement has been greatly bettered at small additional cost by a dressing of crude oil. Treated this way the pavement is known as oiled macadam. It has something of the appearance of asphalt. This pavement is a little cheaper in Richmond than elsewhere because of the cheapness of oil. It costs about 8 cents a square foot. Asphalt pavement costs about 18 cents a square foot."

"There are about 45 miles of oiled macadam streets in Richmond and 12 miles of asphalt thoroughfares—all done under the frontage assessment plan. The real estate men have laid about 45 miles of oiled macadam. About \$4,500,000 worth of street work under the frontage assessment system will be done this year."

"Under a system by which the contractors accept long term bonds at 5 per cent interest, which are a lien on the property, street work can be done

Hawaii to the Front in Wireless Business



Wireless plant of the Mutual Telephone Company, the old and the new. New plant is shown to left of picture.

Development of wireless telegraphy in Hawaii has always been up to or a little ahead of development elsewhere in the world, as it was in Hawaii that the wireless was first made commercially feasible.

The Mutual Telephone Company, keeping pace with the demand for greater and greater facilities, has recently completed a new station for Oahu, that at Wahiawa. The Kahuku station of the company has been changed to the new site at Wahiawa in order to secure a station free from interference by high-power trans-Pacific stations.

Kahuku Wireless Station.

This station was erected during the year 1908, and started operation on the evening of October 15th of the same

year, the first message sent being to the old United Wireless Telegraph Company's Station (P. H.) on Telegraph Hill, San Francisco, California, a distance of 2100 miles.

During the night of October 15, 1908, many messages were sent back and forth between these two stations, this being absolutely the first wireless communication sent without a relay between Hawaii and the mainland of the United States. This long distance, wireless communication attracted newspaper attention throughout the United States.

The Kahuku Station has been in constant operation ever since, serving without imposing any burden upon anyone. The increase in values always far more than pays the cost of the work and the bond interest."

And Richmond is not the only city that sees the advantages of the frontage tax. Berkeley, Oakland, Albany, Hayward and San Leandro may be mentioned as heartily favoring the plan. The communities are in the bay region.

In the Sacramento valley, Sacramento's suburbanites have taken advantage of the tax, as has Stockton, Chico, and Lodi, although much of the latter city's work is by bonds.

Some of the counties of California are no more rich in finances than Honolulu, yet they have seen their way clear to invest in the state bonds for a road to run from one end of the state to the other, the only trouble being that the scheme is so widely favored that the counties are fighting amongst themselves for the privilege of buying the bonds, that they may get a share of the benefits.

Honolulu doesn't need money in the treasury for road improvement. It needs, however, much more of the same kind of spirit that the Ad Club is trying to instill, and the sooner it gets it the better.

Only recently some friends of mine, paying a visit to the islands for the first time, took a ride around the island. One of them is quite a motor enthusiast, but he stated that he was glad that he didn't bring his machine along with him, for it would have been ruined in traveling over Honolulu's "bump the bumps," and canonically remarked that as a concession at the Panama-Pacific exposition some of the worst streets might be forwarded to San Francisco with some of the autos that have been ruined, and the proceeds might be used to repair the other bumps that were left at home.

"And so," said the man who lives in a flat to a friend who is a commuter, "your next door neighbor, you say, is a real philanthropist. 'You bet he is,' said the commuter enthusiastically; 'why, he bought \$10 worth of flower seeds for my chickens last spring.'—Ladies Home Journal.

It is hard to understand why people are willing to bear the torture of headaches when there is such a cure and quick relief at hand. "Shac" banishes headache and many other sorts of pain. It is wonderful and all who use it like it. Insist on "Shac," advertisement.

S. Naval Station, at Pearl Harbor, and the Federal Wireless Station at Heaia, thus insuring as far as possible, on such a limited area as the island of Oahu, a wireless site free from interference from high power trans-Pacific stations.

The entire expense, (estimated at \$10,000.00), incidental to the removal of this station from Kahuku to Wahiawa has been borne by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America, and is an example of the fair and honorable business method of this world-wide and international company.

The Wahiawa Station was erected and placed in operation by L. W. Branch, wireless engineer of the Mutual Telephone Company.

It is interesting to note that no longer ago than the night of March 13 the Oahu Station heard a station near Yokohama which was sending a message to the liner Mongolia. The distance was about 4,000 miles—proof of the excellence of the new service.

ing as the Oahu Ship and Inter-Island Station of the Mutual Telephone Company, and its removal from Kahuku to Wahiawa was necessitated by the erection of the large 600 k. w. Marconi trans-Pacific sending station, at Kahuku, which station, owing to its close proximity of one mile, would have caused interference in the reception and transmission of the old Kahuku Station signals.

Wahiawa Station.

This site was chosen as the successor of the Kahuku Station as being one that offers a ten-mile radius from the Marconi sending station at Kahuku, the proposed high power U.

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